

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00  
USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10  
L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 IO-13 ACDA-12  
HA-05 SSM-03 MCT-01 /094 W  
-----090782 131805Z /53

O R 131631Z MAR 78  
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1882  
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN  
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT  
AMEMBASSY CAIRO  
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS  
AMEMBASSY JIDDA  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN  
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM  
USMISSION USUN  
USMISSION SINAI

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E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: PINS, IS  
SUBJECT: A GRIEVING ISRAEL ASKS SEARCHING QUESTIONS: TAKES AN IDF  
RETALIATION FOR GRANTED

REF: TEL AVIV 3310

1. SUMMARY: NOT YET RECOVERED FROM THE SHOCK  
AND GRIEF OF THE MARCH 11 BLOOD-BATH, ISRAELIS ARE QUES-  
TIONING THE EASE WITH WHICH THE TERRORISTS ENTERED AND  
CARRIED ON WITH NEAR IMPUNITY FOR 45 MINUTES. THE NAVY,  
IN PARTICULAR, IS BEING CALLED TO TASK, WHILE INVESTIGATIONS  
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ARE ORDERED BY PM BEGIN. RETALIATION IS UNIVERSALLY EX-  
PECTED AND WIDELY SUPPORTED. MANY ARE DEMANDING SOMETHING SPECIAL.  
MEANWHILE, THE PRESS URGES NO INTERRUPTION IN PEACE EFFORTS  
WITH EGYPT. END SUMMARY

2. AN ISRAEL STILL STUNNED AND GRIEF-STRICKEN BY THE  
MARCH 11 CARNAGE IS TODAY BURYING SOME OF ITS DEAD AND TURNING

TO A CRITICAL SELF-EXAMINATION. REMINDED ONCE AGAIN  
OF ITS VULNERABILITY TO THIS KIND OF ATTACK  
BY THE BLOODIEST TERRORIST  
READ IN THE STATE'S HISTORY, THE PRESS AND PUBLIC ARE TODAY  
QUESTIONING THE LAPSE IN ISRAEL'S COASTAL SURVEILLANCE  
WHICH PERMITTED THE PENETRATION AND REGISTERING DIS-  
SATISFACTION WITH THE SUBSEQUENT POLICE AND MILITARY EFFORTS TO STOP  
THE TERRORISTS' ONCE THEY BEGAN THEIR RAMPAGE.

3. PRIME MINISTER BEGIN HAS ORDERED SEPARATE TOP-LEVEL  
INQUIRIES BY THE ARMY AND POLICE OF THE TERRORIST ATTACK.  
THE CABINET MET TODAY IN SPECIAL SESSION, AFTER WHICH IT  
WAS ANNOUNCED THAT BEGIN WOULD THIS AFTERNOON ADDRESS THE KNESSET  
ON SATURDAY'S EVENTS. ACCORDING TO THE JERUSALEM POST, SOME  
KNESSET MEMBERS ARE CALLING FOR A FULL-SCALE, FORMAL INVESTIGATION  
OF POSSIBLE CONFUSION AND POOR COORDINATION  
IN RESPONDING TO THE ATTACK.

4. THE NAVY IS BEING CALLED TO ACCOUNT BY MANY FOR THIS  
THIRD SUCCESSFUL VIOLATION OF ISRAEL'S SEA DEFENSES IN AS  
MANY YEARS. (THE OTHER TWO WERE THE SAVOY HOTEL ATTACK IN  
1975 AND THE LANDING ON A TEL AVIV BEACH SOME 18 MONTHS AGO  
OF A GROUP OF TERRORISTS WHO IMMEDIATELY GAVE THEMSELVES  
UP.) IN AN ARTICLE IN YESTERDAY'S HAARETZ, WIDELY-RESPECTED  
MILITARY ANALYST ZE'EV SCHIFF PLACES THE BLAME SQUARELY ON  
THE NAVY FOR FAILING TO PREVENT THE PENETRATION.  
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HOWEVER, OTHERS HAVE EXPLAINED THAT ISRAEL COULD ONLY SEAL  
ITS COAST IF IT PROHIBITED PLEASURE-CRAFT AND OTHERWISE  
RESTRICTED NORMAL TRAFFIC IN ITS WATERS. CITING REPORTS  
THAT THE TWO RUBBER BOATS USED BY THE TERRORISTS CAME  
FROM A MOTHER SHIP THAT SAILED FROM LEBANON THE PREVIOUS  
DAY, MANY CRITICS WERE UNIMPRESSED BY THE EXPLANATION.

5. ISRAELIS ARE ALSO DISTURBED BY THE ABILITY OF THE  
TERRORISTS TO SHOOT THEIR WAY ALONG ISRAEL'S  
MAIN ARTERIAL HIGHWAY FOR ABOUT 45 MINUTES. SOME OF THE  
QUESTIONS BEING ASKED TODAY: WHERE WAS THE ARMY WHILE THIS WAS  
GOING ON? WHY WAS THE JOB  
OF STOPPING THE BUS LEFT TO RESERVISTS AND VOLUNTEER POLICE  
MANNING A ROADBLOCK? AND FINALLY, WAS THIS NOT ANOTHER  
FAILURE OF ISRAEL'S INTELLIGENCE, SINCE THE SCOPE OF THE  
TERRORIST OPERATION INDICATED CONSIDERABLE PLANNING.

6. ISRAELIS TAKE A SMALL MEASURE OF COMFORT FROM WHAT  
COULD HAVE BEEN. ACCORDING TO THE TWO CAPTURED TERRORISTS, THEIR  
GOAL WAS TO TAKE OVER A MAJOR HOTEL IN TEL AVIV. IF THAT  
HAD OCCURRED, IT IS REALIZED THE GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE  
HAD TO FACE THE AGONIZING DECISION WHETHER TO GIVE IN TO TERRORIST

DEMANDS IN EXCHANGE FOR THE LIVES OF SCORES OF HOSTAGES.  
MOREOVER, HAD THE TERRORISTS IN THE BUS, REACHED TEL AVIV,  
CROWDED WITH END-OF-SHABBAT CROWDS, THE DEATH TOLL  
COULD HAVE BEEN MUCH HIGHER.

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7. BEGIN'S DECISION TO POSTPONE HIS TRIP TO WASHINGTON  
IS GENERALLY APPLAUDED, AS IS THE RECALL OF DEFMIN WEIZ-  
MAN. SOME, HOWEVER, QUESTION WHETHER A WHOLE WEEK'S POST-  
PONEMENT WAS NECESSARY. TV POLITICAL ANALYST DAN RAVIV  
TOLD US BEGIN WOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER ADVISED TO PROCEED  
TO THE U.S. AFTER A DELAY OF ONLY TWO OR THREE DAYS. THE  
IMPACT OF THE SLAUGHTER WOULD THEN HAVE BEEN STILL FRESH  
WITH THE AMERICAN PUBLIC. AS IT IS, RAVIV FEARED BEGIN  
WILL BE ARRIVING JUST AS PICTURES OF ISRAELI-  
CAUSED CASUALTIES FROM AN EXPECTED RETALIATORY STRIKE  
REACH AMERICAN TV SCREENS.

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8. NO ONE HERE DOUBTS THAT ISRAEL WILL RETALIATE. WHILE THERE ARE NO DEMONSTRATIONS OR MASS MEETINGS CALLING FOR REVENGE, AN IDF RIPOSTE IS TAKEN FOR GRANTED. THERE ARE DEMANDS THAT IT BE MASSIVE AND "SPECTACULAR" (BEN-ZIMAN IN HAARETZ). THE TYPICAL ISRAELI REACTION OF AN AIR STRIKE INEVITABLY INVOLVING CIVILIAN CASUALTIES IS REJECTED BY SEVERAL COMMENTATORS AS INADEQUATE, INEFFECTIVE AND HARMFUL TO ISRAEL'S IMAGE. THE CALLS ARE FOR AN IMAGINATIVE AND BOLD OPERATION THAT WILL DEAL EFFECTIVE DAMAGE TO THE TERROR GROUPS. HAMODIA, THE ORGAN OF AGUDAY YISRAEL, WRITES: "THERE IS ROOM FOR ASKING WHETHER THE GRAVEST REVENGE HAS EVER SUCCEEDED IN DETERRING ARAB TERRORISTS IN THE PAST. THE SYSTEM OF PUNISHMENT FOR TERRORISTS SHOULD BE REEXAMINED AND UNCONVENTIONAL MEASURES FOR STOPPING THEIR ACTIVITY SHOULD BE LOOKED FOR." FOR THE MOST PART, THERE IS LITTLE PATIENCE WITH ANY SUGGESTION OF FOREBEARANCE. FOR EXAMPLE, THE JERUSALEM POST, GENERALLY VIEWED AS MODERATE, EXPRESSES SOME OF ISRAEL'S COLLECTIVE ANGER AND FRUSTRATION IN THIS PASSAGE OF TODAY'S EDITORIAL: "TO BE SURE, MANY OF OUR FRIENDS WILL SUGGEST THE ALTERNATIVE OF OFFERING THE OTHER CHEEK. THEY SHOULD BE TOLD TO PROFFER THEIR OWN, PREFERABLY THE OIL-HUNGRY ONE."

9. THE POST GOES ON TO SAY "AND FINALLY, IT IS MOST ESSENTIAL THAT THE PLO'S SHORT-TERM GOAL, THE IRREPARABLE UNDERMINING OF THE NEGOTIATIONS WITH EGYPT, BE CONFOUNDED. CONTRARY TO THE FEARS EXPRESSED IN SOME OF THE COMMENTS HEARD ABROAD YESTERDAY, THERE IS NO REASON WHY SATURDAY'S TERRORIST ACTION, OR A WELL-CONCEIVED AND WELL-EXECUTED ISRAEL RESPONSE, SHOULD PREJUDICE ISRAEL'S OR EGYPT'S DETERMINATION TO OVERCOME DIFFICULTIES ON THE ROAD TO AN AGREEMENT. IT SHOULD BE RECALLED THAT MAJOR ISRAEL

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SHELLING OF SOUTHERN LEBANON IN RETALIATION FOR THE KATYUSHA ATTACKS ON NAHARIYA LAST NOVEMBER DID NOT PREVENT SADAT FROM COMING TO JERUSALEM."

10. IN FACT, OBSERVERS ARE UNANIMOUS IN DECLARING THAT THE PEACE PROCESS MUST CONTINUE. AS WE REPORTED YESTERDAY, MANY EVEN THINK THE COMMON SUFFERING OF EGYPT (LARNACA) AND ISRAEL AT THE HANDS OF THE PLO COULD FORGE SOME SORT OF UNSTATED BOND AND PROMOTE ACCOMMODATION ON THE PALESTINAIN QUESTION.

THERE IS DISAPPOINTMENT THAT THERE HAS BEEN NO OFFICIAL  
EGYPTIAN MESSAGE AS YET WHICH PARALLELS BEGIN'S PUBLIC  
STATEMENT OF CONDOLENCE AFTER LARNACA.  
VIETS

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## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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**Copy:** SINGLE  
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